

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, June 11,
1782. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
1900-1910.**

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.¹

1 From the Madison Papers (1840).

Philadelphia, June 11, 1782.

Dear Sir, —I have your favor of the first instant. I hope you have received mine, although you do not acknowledge them. My punctuality has not been intermitted more than once or twice since your departure, and in no instance for a considerable time past.

I have written so fully concerning the flags that I have nothing to add on that subject, but that I wish the Senate may, by their perseverance on this occasion, exemplify the utility of a check to the precipitate acts of a single legislature.

Having raised my curiosity by your hints as to certain manœuvres, you will not forget your responsibility to gratify it. The pleasure I feel at your being included in the commission for vindicating the claims of Virginia, is considerably impaired by my fears that it may retard your return hither.

Great as my partiality is to Mr. Jefferson, the mode in which he seems determined to revenge the wrong received from his country does not appear to me to be dictated either by philosophy or patriotism.² It argues,

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2 He had temporarily retired from public life.

indeed, a keen sensibility and strong consciousness of rectitude. But this sensibility ought to be as great towards the relentings as the misdoings of the Legislature, not to mention the injustice of visiting the faults of this body on their innocent constituents.

Sir Guy Carleton still remains silent. The resolutions which the Legislatures of the States are passing, may, perhaps, induce him to spare British pride the mortification of supplicating in vain the forgiveness of rebels.

Mr. Izard, warm and notorious as his predilection for the Lees is, acknowledges and laments the opposition made by them to measures adapted to the public weal.

The letter in the first page of the Gazette of this morning was written by Mr. Marbois.¹ In an evening of promiscuous conversation I suggested to him my opinion, that the insidiousness of the British Court, and the good faith of our ally, displayed in the late abortive attempt of the former to seduce the latter, might with advantage be made known, in some form

¹ The letter appeared in the *Pennsylvania Packet* for June 11, 1782, as an “Extract of a letter, written from Philadelphia by a gentleman in office, to one of the principal officers of the State of New Jersey.” Marbois' authorship was carefully concealed, the letter purporting to come from an American. It confirmed the reported victory of Sir G. Rodney over the French in the West Indies, but declared it to be a barren one, and that it had “afforded us an occasion of displaying a national character, a good faith, a constancy and firmness worthy of a people who are free, and determined to perish sooner than cease to be so,” as the resolutions to reject offers of a separate peace passed in Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and New Jersey showed. The article is printed in full in the *Madison Papers*, vol. iii., xxxvi.

or other, to the public at large. He said he would think of the matter, and next day sent me the letter in question, with a request that I would revise and translate it for the press,

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the latter of which was done. I mention this that you may duly appreciate the facts and sentiments contained in this publication.